

REMARKS

Reconsideration of the application is requested.

Claims 9, 10 and 12-18 remain in the application. Claims 9, 10 and 12-18 are subject to examination. Claims 9 and 17 have been amended. Claims 1-8 and 11 have been or were previously canceled.

Under the heading "Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102" on pages 2-3 of the above-identified Office Action, claims 9, 11-13 and 18 have been rejected as being fully anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,538,866 to Hanzawa et al. (hereinafter Hanzawa) under 35 U.S.C. § 102.

Applicant respectfully differs with the Examiner in regards to the interpretation of Hanzawa. Fig. 1 of Hanzawa shows a circuit configuration 1 for protection against overvoltages. This circuit configuration 1 has a first circuit 2 for protection against voltage surges and a circuit 3, for detecting overvoltages.

A switching circuit 4 is driven from the result of the overvoltage detection by the circuit 3. Neither the resistances RC1 and RC2 represent a current limiting device nor does the transistor M1 represent a switching element for separating the load F1. A BIAS source for operating a

reference voltage source, which is formed of the two MOS transistors MD1 and MD2, is provided with the aid of the resistances RC1 and RC2 and the MOS transistor MC1 (see column 4, lines 17-25).

The output of the MOS transistor MC1 is connected with the gate terminal of a further MOS transistor M1, the control output of M1 is connected with the gate of a MOS transistor M2. The MOS transistor M2 serves for turning off the load in the case of an overvoltage. It is emphasized that Hanzawa does not teach a protection circuit for a sensor, but teaches only a protection circuit for a load F1.

In contrast, claim 9 of the instant application recites "a current measuring unit for detecting an electric current flowing through said supply line for preventing damage to the sensor from excess voltage" (emphasis added). The invention of the instant application teaches a sensor protection circuit having a current measuring unit, which monitors the current flow in the supply line 3 and thus detects an overvoltage. Furthermore, according to claim 9, the invention shows a current limiting device, which, in dependence upon the output signal of the current measuring unit, limits the current flow in the supply line 3.

Nevertheless, claim 9 has been amended to further distinguish the instant application from the prior art. Claim 9 has been amended to recite "a separate control input connected to said circuit element, in a case of a short circuit lasting for a predetermined period of time said separate control input driving said circuit element into a non-conducting state resulting in said at least one supply line being disconnected". Support for the change is found from original claim 11 and from page 7, line 33 to page 8, line 8 of the specification of the instant application. Hanzawa is not believed to teach a separate control input for disconnecting the supply line should a short circuit last for a predetermined period of time.

Under the heading "Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103" on pages 3-4 of the above-identified Office Action, claims 10 and 14-16 have been rejected as being obvious over Hanzawa in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,414,792 to Shorey (hereinafter Shorey) under 35 U.S.C. § 103.

Shorey is only cited by the Examiner to show that a capacitor can be disposed between the two potentials of the voltage supply. As these claims depend from claim 9, they are also believed to be allowable.

It is accordingly believed to be clear that none of the references, whether taken alone or in any combination, either show or suggest the features of claim 9. Claim 9 is, therefore, believed to be patentable over the art. The dependent claims are believed to be patentable as well because they all are ultimately dependent on claim 9.

Finally, applicant appreciatively acknowledges the Examiner's statement that claim 17 "would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims." In light of the above, claim 17 has been put in independent form.

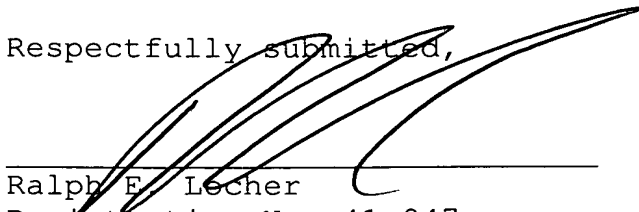
In view of the foregoing, reconsideration and allowance of claims 9, 10 and 12-18 are solicited.

If an extension of time is required, petition for extension is herewith made. Any extension fee associated therewith should be charged to the Deposit Account of Lerner and Greenberg, P.A., No. 12-1099.

Please charge any other fees that might be due with respect to Sections 1.16 and 1.17 to the Deposit Account of Lerner and

Greenberg, P.A., No. 12-1099.

Respectfully submitted,



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